



fighting heart disease
and stroke

european heart network

Statement to the press on the European Heart Network Position paper:

Heated Tobacco Products and Cardiovascular Disease

(embargo 29 September 2021 00:01h)

Brussels, 29 September 2021: Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) are tobacco products, they contain tobacco and nicotine, create addiction and are similarly harmful to smokers and non smokers. They are particularly harmful to the cardiovascular system as they increase the heart rate and blood pressure (similar to conventional cigarettes). HTPs have similar devastating effects on cardiovascular health as conventional cigarettes.

These are the main conclusions brought together in the latest European Heart Network paper on Heated Tobacco Products and Cardiovascular Disease¹.

Birgit Beger, CEO of the European Heart Network clarifies: *‘On this World Heart Day, EHN launches the paper to change the idea that heated tobacco products are safe. The opposite is true: Users of HTPs suffer from similar devastating effects on the cardiovascular health system as users of conventional cigarettes.’*

The paper brings out the latest evidence on the impact of heated tobacco products on cardiovascular health. In 2019, the European Heart Network published its position paper on electronic cigarettes² (e-cigarettes). Heated tobacco products (HTPs) were deliberately disregarded from that position paper, as the scientific evidence for HTP products was not clear yet. However, the body of evidence on HTP products is growing and the aim of this paper is to draw attention to the current evidence and provide our recommendations for regulation on heated tobacco products.

Not surprisingly, **EHN issues the following recommendations with regard to Heated Tobacco Products:**

- A clear definition of HTPs is imperative.
- Users of HTPs suffer from similar, devastating effects on cardiovascular health as conventional cigarettes. They can therefore not be recommended as safe alternatives, nicotine replacement therapies or quit aids.

¹ **Link to the paper** will be activated on 29 September 2021: : <https://ehnheart.org/publications-and-papers/position-papers-and-statements/1327:heated-tobacco-products.html>

² <https://ehnheart.org/publications-and-papers/publications/1241:electronic-cigarettes-and-cardiovascular-disease.html>

- HTPs produce second-hand smoke, both indoors and outdoors and can therefore not be considered safe for non-users.
- Considering the similarities in CVD outcome in users of HTPs and conventional cigarettes, both should be subject to the full effect of the Tobacco Products Directive. In countries where the TPD does not apply, HTPs should be subject to the same smoke free legislation.
- Considering the similarities in CVD outcome in users of HTPs and conventional cigarettes, taxes and excise duties on HTPs should be at the same level as for conventional cigarettes.

In view of the current revision of the Tobacco Taxation Directive (TTD), and the upcoming review of the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD), this report provides evidence on why HTPs should be included in the TPD, should not be exempt from smoke free legislation and should be taxed in the same way as conventional cigarettes.

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Note to Editors

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) – the main forms of which are coronary heart disease and stroke – is the main cause of death in Europe as well as in the European Union (EU), where it is responsible for 3.9 million and 1.8 million deaths respectively every year.³ CVD is also a major cause of disability and a significant economic burden across the EU, estimated to cost the EU economy almost 210 billion euros every year.⁴

Leading risk factors for CVD are tobacco use, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, overweight and obesity, physical inactivity, diabetes, unhealthy diets, and harmful use of alcohol. It is estimated that smoking is responsible for over 16% of all cardiovascular deaths in the WHO European region (almost 700 000 deaths) and 12.8% in the European Union (almost 260 000 deaths).⁵

About the European Heart Network

The European Heart Network (EHN) is a Brussels-based alliance of foundations and associations dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke and supporting patient organisations throughout Europe.

The EHN plays a leading role in the prevention and reduction of cardiovascular diseases, in particular heart disease and stroke, through advocacy, networking, capacity-building, patient support, and research so that they are no longer a major cause of premature death and disability throughout Europe. www.ehnheart.org

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³ Wilkins, E. *et al.* European Cardiovascular Disease Statistics 2017. *European Heart Network* (2017)

⁴ Wilkins, E. *et al.* European Cardiovascular Disease Statistics 2017. *European Heart Network* (2017)

⁵ Data from the Global Burden of Disease database (2019) <https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare/>